

2Fly/BMB Gang Takedown
Prepared Remarks of U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara
April 27, 2016

Good afternoon. My name is Preet Bharara, and I am the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Today, we announce what is believed to be the largest gang takedown in New York City history. We have charged 120 defendants in two rival Bronx street gangs with racketeering, narcotics, and firearms offenses. In addition, the charges include allegations of multiple murders, attempted murders, shootings, stabbings, and beatings committed in furtherance of federal racketeering conspiracies.

Yesterday evening and early this morning, nearly 700 NYPD officers and federal agents swept through the city to make arrests and to conduct court-authorized searches.

Why did we bring these charges and take these actions today? The answer is simple: to make the city safer for its citizens – particular those who live in and around public housing projects who have suffered far too long with drugs and violence as an unavoidable part of their everyday lives.

We bring these charges so that all New Yorkers, including those in public housing, can live their lives as they deserve: free of drugs, free of guns, and free of gang violence.

How did this investigation start? It began in December 2014, at a time when violence was surging in the areas around the Eastchester Gardens housing projects in the Bronx. It started with dedicated police officers and federal agents – working with committed gang prosecutors in our office – asking themselves two basic questions: What accounts for all this violence? And what can we do about it?

It turns out that much of the violence was caused by two street gangs: one called the “2Fly YGz” and the “Big Money Bosses.” These gangs have been at war with each other (and other gangs in the Bronx) for nearly a decade.

These gangs didn’t distinguish between rival gang members and law-abiding residents of the community. If you were in the wrong place at the wrong time, you could be shot, stabbed, even killed.

They didn’t distinguish between young and old either. As alleged in the indictment, murder victims of these gangs range from a 15 year-old child, allegedly stabbed to death, to a 92 year-old woman killed in her own home by a stray bullet.

The 2Fly gang – a subset of the city-wide “Young Gunnaz,” or “YG” gang – is based in the NYCHA housing complex of Eastchester Gardens.

Over 2,000 people live at Eastchester Gardens – the vast majority hardworking families trying to raise their families, earn a living and go to school in peace. But for years, as we allege, 2Fly terrorized the residents of Eastchester Gardens, maintaining a stranglehold on the housing complex and its surrounding areas.

They took over a playground in the middle of Eastchester Gardens, and instead of children playing in safety, members of 2Fly allegedly stored guns and sold drugs in that playground. Both of the indictments include charges of narcotics distribution near public schools and play grounds.

Today's charges and arrests essentially dismantle the 2Fly gang from top to bottom.

BMB, the rival gang, is a subset of the citywide "Young Bosses," or "YBz" gang. Its members also call themselves the "Money Making Mafia," "Triple M," or "Blamma." BMB operates a few blocks away on White Plains Road from 215th Street to 233rd Street.

This area is a long stretch of road hedged on both sides by single-family homes and stores, with a number of playgrounds and schools. Like 2Fly, BMB stored guns in abandoned homes and other public places for easy access. And like 2Fly, BMB has allegedly been responsible for dozens of shootings, stabbings, beatings, and robberies, including several murders and attempted murders.

Today's charges and arrests dismantle BMB as well, from top to bottom.

As the Indictments allege, 2Fly and BMB were not only at war with each other, but with other gangs operating out of nearby NYCHA housing developments – violent organizations like the Slut Gang, based in the Boston Secor housing development and the YSGz, based in the Edenwald.

As we have seen with many criminal enterprises recently, 2Fly and BMB actively used social media to promote, protect, and grow their ranks – including by posting videos on YouTube bragging about their criminal endeavors. During the course of this investigation, we obtained warrants for over a hundred Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts connected to the defendants' alleged criminal activity.

Now, let me pause for a moment to say a few more things about the victims of these crimes.

I am talking not just about the direct victims who were robbed, beaten, stabbed, shot, and even killed. But also the residents of the communities who have had to suffer through the gang violence and the drug dealing: the gun shots in the middle of the night; the open air drug markets in playgrounds and schoolyards; and the constant dread that their children or other loved ones might become the victim of a stray bullet. These are people whose struggles too often, go unrecognized.

If you live in public housing, you also have the right to live in a clean and safe environment.

These are the over 400,000 NYCHA residents who – according to HUD regulations – are entitled to housing that is, and I quote, “decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.” It is clear that many are not getting that.

That is why my office’s Civil Division is looking separately at whether NYCHA is actually providing housing that satisfies these HUD-mandated conditions – housing that is “decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.”

Because at the end of the day, these worries are interwoven. Whether NYCHA buildings have proper lighting, working elevators, trash-free hallways, and lead and mold-free apartments – in other words, whether the housing is “decent, safe, sanitary and in good repair” – affects whether gangs and drugs can take hold of areas and neighbors.

It affects whether the rule of law reigns or the chaos of a gang takes root.

While today’s actions won’t solve all the problems at the Eastchester Gardens, they go a long way in eradicating the source of so much mayhem in that neighborhood – the 2Fly and BMB gangs.

The charges and arrests today – the largest of its kind the City has ever seen – are the product of remarkable cooperation among state and federal law enforcement agencies. So there are a lot of partners to acknowledge and thank – please bear with me.

First, I want to thank the NYPD, represented here today by its great Commissioner, Commissioner Bratton. I also want to thank Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce; Deputy Chief Jason Wilcox, Commanding Officer of Detective Bureau - Bronx; Inspector Christopher McCormack; Captain Louis Deceglie; Lt. Michael Costello; Sgt. John King of the Bronx Gang Squad; and NYPD Detectives Paul Jeselson and Paul O’Connor.

Also critical to this investigation was Homeland Security Investigations, represented here today by Angel M. Melendez, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Office. From HSI, I want to specifically recognize Special Agents Todd Kowalski and Paul Pasuco.

I want to thank another partner in so many of our drug cases, the DEA, represented by James J. Hunt, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division. I also want to thank Will Plummer, Associate Special Agent-in Charge and DEA Special Agents Moises Walters and Bruce Hom.

From the ATF, represented by Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge James Higgins, I would like to thank Detective John Urena of the Joint Firearms Task Force, and ATF Special Agent Dean Conigliaro.

I also want to thank Michael Greco, the U.S. Marshal, and his team, as well as the New York State Office of Special Investigations – Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

for assistance in today's arrests; the New York City Department of Investigation; the Bronx District Attorney's Office; and the Westchester District Attorney's Office.

Finally, I want to commend the work of the career prosecutors on this case: Assistant United States Attorneys Rachel Maimin, Micah Smith, Robert Allen, Hagan Scotten, Jessica Feinstein, and Drew Johnson-Skinner, supervised by Laurie Korenbaum and Nola Heller, the Co-Chiefs of this Office's Violent and Organized Crime Unit.

Law enforcement has no mission or obligation more important than keeping our people safe. And as I have said before, when gangs proliferate, neighborhoods suffer, communities disintegrate, and innocent children die.

The message to the people living in these communities is this: we are here and committed to making your neighborhoods safe – decent and safe.

And for those who are in a gang or are thinking about joining a gang, the message is more blunt: Unless you like jail or death, don't do it.